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ABSTRACT

This case study reports on the experiences of teachers and student teachers during the process of developing and implementing professional development sites (PDSs) at one urban and two rural middle schools. The study examines the phases of development that teachers go through in the process of developing PDSs and how teachers' level of development affects the development of the overall PDS. It also examines the benefits, to student teachers and to supervising teachers, of PDS-based training of preservice teachers. The focus of PDS activity at the three sites was preservice teacher training. Student teachers at one of the PDSs responded positively to a 2-week orientation to the school, designed by a core group of teachers (n=6) at the site, which introduced preservice teachers (n=5) to teaming, the school advisement program, teaching strategies, management techniques, lesson planning, and media. Both student teachers and supervising teachers concurred on three primary benefits of the PDS program: (1) support was available for both preservice and cooperating teachers; (2) student teachers became familiar with the school and its procedures, which gave them a framework for understanding school operations and made the supervising teachers' jobs easier; and (3) student teachers had the chance to observe various teaching styles. (Contains 21 references.) (IAH)

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SITES: REVITALIZING PRESERVICE EDUCATION IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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Professional development sites: Revitalizing preservice education in middle schools.

Introduction

One of the new trends in pre-service education is the implementation of professional development sites (PDSs) in the United States (Abdal-Haqq, 1991). A PDS is a public school whereby preservice teachers from a college or university are trained to be teachers (Holmes Group, 1990). The public school teachers in each school have autonomy to determine what experiences the student teachers will receive. Teachers from the university serve as liaisons and resources to the public school teachers and the preservice teachers. According to McGowan and Powell (1993), a PDS allows students to view an integration of theory with practice preceded by equal governance, problem-solving, and communication between both levels (public school and university).

Professional development sites (PDSs) are replacing college practicum experiences by having teachers work with university people to design experiences for students. Charleston Southern University received a grant from The South Carolina Center for School Leadership to develop PDSs in 3 schools. In this study, three schools agreed to participate to develop preservice experiences for college juniors. The three schools were very different in their setting, in their leadership, and in their level of commitment. By examining the progress of each of these three schools, educators at the university level and at the public school level may be able to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of their programs.

Professional development sites are also serving as agents of change (Levine, 1988). Koerner (1992), identified concerns of supervising teachers for student teachers. In her study, eight supervising teachers expressed concern that "the student teacher is overwhelmed by the enormity of the day-to-day routine when so many things happened during a 6-hour day..." (p. 49). In her study, supervising teachers also voiced concerns about the university's lack of direction and support.

In this study, a PDS cadre of teachers along with a university supervisor prepared and implemented an orientation experience for student teachers. Through a PDS relationship, teachers and university personnel worked together to help the supervising teacher. From the research, new ideas of how better to work with supervising teachers was developed.

This research is very timely considering colleges of education are being criticized for not preparing students well enough for teaching. It is my hope that this research will further support efforts of colleges of education and schools to provide valuable experiences for preservice teachers as well as school teachers and administrators.

Background

PDSs stemmed from the Holmes Group's Tomorrow's Schools (1986) and was supported by the Carnegie Foundation (1986), the American Federation of Teachers (Levine 1992), and John Goodlad's (1990) views of school reform. The Holmes Group in 1990, John Goodlad in 1992, National Education Association in 1993, and the authors of Turning Points in 1993 have endorsed the need for revisiting the issue of preservice education in our colleges and

universities. What each of these groups is proposing is that colleges and universities become partners with public schools to assist, not dictate, what kinds of experiences preservice teachers should have (Colin, 1992).

Goodlad (1990) suggests that preservice teachers need to be supervised by more than one teacher. In some practicum experiences, the whole school has been involved in the practicum experience, with the college supervisor based in the school. According to Zeichner (1992), the PDS experience "is an exciting time for those involved in the education of prospective teachers in the practicum", offering "an opportunity to fully transform the practicum and to link teacher education and school reform" (p. 304). This researcher contends that the experience of running a PDS will benefit everyone involved.

Merseth and Sandholtz (1992) researched a collaborative teacher education effort and identified extrinsic and intrinsic rewards associated with those who were involved in the experience. Teachers who were part of the PDS effort were involved in policy making and decision making in the school. Teachers involved identified that they realized that "professional educators valued their input and considered them as equals" (p. 311). They developed a "sense of status" and prestige (p. 312). Teachers also received an increase in their own expertise, efficacy within their own classroom, improved collegiality, and self-renewal.

One hitch in the development of PDSs is the commitment to the implementation by teachers in the schools involved and

university personnel. It may be possible that some schools are not ready to enter into a PDS program. Nadler (1987), contends that power, anxiety, and control are factors which influence change. According to researchers, if there is no evidence that the program is going to be purposeful to those who are involved in it, there is the likelihood that the program will fail (Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman & Miller, 1986; Rushcamp & Roehler, 1992; and Sarason, 1982).

Dixon and Ishler (1992) describe their development as a PDS school at the University of South Carolina. They started with those teachers who were interested in working to establish a PDS in what Kagan (1991) has described as the forming stage. In their second stage of development, conceptualization, roles and responsibilities by school and university were determined. To continue the development stage, teachers, administrators, and university people set up a system of communication and the groups determined the types of restructuring activities to pursue. When some groups were "ready" to move into the implementation stage, they did so with the support of the university. The final stages according to Kagan (1991) are evaluation and termination. Again, the university was set up to be in full support, to offer research training and consultation. From the research, there appeared to be two problems. One was there was mentioned a lack of commitment of individuals at some schools and at the university level. A second problem noted was that many of the schools were not reaching the implementation level of development.

Hall, Loucks, Rutherford, and Newlove (1975) identified levels that individuals experience during the implementation of any innovation. It appears that individuals experience different levels of use (LoU), depending on the amount of orientation and preparation received prior to implementing an innovation. The LoU were part of a Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) researchers developed. Stages one through three included awareness, information, and personal concerns. Management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing comprised the later stages. These stages may be seen within groups of teachers who are participating in the development of PDSs.

Rushcamp and Roehler's (1992) identified six principles they believed guide change in professional development schools. The first principle is that of giving teachers plenty of genuine support and encouragement during the experience. The second principle is that each school must move at its own pace toward a product. The foundation of the experience must revolve around school needs is the third principle. The vision must be beyond one event is the fourth principle. The fifth principle includes finding a balance whereby teachers are encouraged and challenged and not overburdened. Finally, the sixth principles warns educators to be very thorough in their approach.

This study is a case study of three schools, their experiences and the outcome of each to determine, if possible, what influences the development of PDS and what benefits the program produces. From the data, middle school teachers and leaders will be able to identify steps toward creating professional development sites.

The Setting

This is a case study of the experiences of three groups of teachers from three schools who volunteered to work with a college professor to develop experiences that preservice teachers could take prior to student teaching to prepare them for student teaching. Each of the groups of teachers were very different and went through the process of creating PDSs for preservice teachers in three very different ways.

As an incentive, we offered a graduate course which each of the teachers in the partner schools, that were designated ahead of time, could take. Two of the schools chose to take the course, one school did not. Because of the timing of the study, student teachers were used to pilot the program. From the experiences, this researcher coded and describes the phases that each group of teachers from each school went through and has identified the advantages of working as part of a PDS team. The names of the schools have been changed.

Methodology

The goals of the study were to describe the PDS experience as it related to 3 schools and to determine if the product of the experience was beneficial to preservice teachers. A case study approach was used to determine the phases of development these groups of teachers went through. Field notes, surveys and interviews were used to determine the benefits and pitfalls of working as part of a PDS. Data were coded according to themes and conclusions were drawn based on at least 50% agreement among teachers was established.

Kirk and Miller (1986) defined qualitative research as involving "sustained interaction with the people being studied in their own language, and on their own turf" (p. 12). In this case study, two interactions are described: the first is the relationship teachers had at each of the three PDS schools; a second is an analysis of the student teachers' experiences. A detailed examination of teams of teachers who worked together to create a PDS guide for training preservice teachers is described. Field notes were kept during the 2-week orientation program. Supervising teachers, student teachers, PDS committee teachers, and the college supervisor all evaluated the orientation program. Surveys were given to student teachers in the school and student teachers who were not involved in an orientation program in other schools. The results were coded and described.

Questions

1. What phases of development do teachers go through in developing a PDS?
2. What are the benefits for working as a PDS to train preservice teachers?

Part I

A Description of the 5 Month Process

This case study was conducted in two parts over a period of 5 months. The first part describes the schools involved in the project and their teachers' levels of commitment to the project. This description can be used as a guide for schools interested in setting up PDS with institutions. Documentation of the programs and anecdotal records were examined to describe the relationships

between teachers and the project. Patterns were sought and described.

Teachers from three schools were involved in taking a course to develop their school as a Professional Development Site. One of the schools was in the inner-city and the other two were rural schools. A description of each school may assist the reader in understanding the development of each school toward becoming a PDS. The following is an overview of the ethos in each of the schools.

Rocky Middle School. This school is in the inner-city. The teachers listened with skepticism as I introduced the idea of working together to create a PDS. Very few were interested in listening to me on a Monday during their planning period in which they were forced to attend and had heard or remembered nothing about PDSs. One teacher's comment was, "We could have done it last year; this year we don't have time." The principal is very new to the middle school concept. In the initial meeting the principal, assistant principal and two teachers attended. The school is predominately a minority school. Within a month of the course, the teachers dropped out of the course and said they would do their version of a PDS on their own. They were told they could not quit by the principal. Two weeks later, they came back wanting to take the course and were on track to create the program. By the end of the course, the administrators and the lead teacher had quit participating and the teachers who were left had completed a project for preservice teachers.

Bouquet Middle School. This school is in a rural area and the principal has had extensive experience in working in middle

schools. The school serves 1100 students, most of who are bussed in and the racial make-up is mixed. After my presentation to the whole staff on a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, the teachers were asked to apply in writing if they were interested in participating in the development of the PDS. Eight teachers asked to be a part of the experience. Two of those eight dropped out before the course started. The teachers at Bouquet Middle School embraced the idea and worked very diligently throughout the entire experience. The group maintained their momentum throughout the project. They were very task oriented and shared the responsibilities.

Tornado Elementary School. This school is an elementary school of approximately 500 children in a rural area. When I introduced the idea of a PDS, the teachers listened during their afternoon grade level meetings. They indicated that they were very busy already. No teachers signed up to take the course. The principal appointed an Ad Hoc committee to work on the proposal. When I asked how they felt about the experience, one teacher said, "You don't want to know how I feel about this." That was not the overwhelming consensus, but there was tension throughout the experience. I immediately arranged a field trip to go and view two elementary schools that were involved in a PDS experience. After the field trip, they were not as hostile. By the end of the 5 months, this group of teachers had a marginal view of what a PDS is and the direction they want to go.

During the 5 month experience, each school's progress was documented in a journal by the researcher. The process teachers

went through can be seen in Table 1 which describes a monthly description of each school's development.

Table 1.

A comparison of three schools over time.

Bouquet School	Rocky School	Tornado School
October:		
Principal gave teachers a free choice to participate in the program. Principal did not participate	Teachers were strongly encouraged to participate Principal participated	Teachers were placed on an Ad Hoc committee Principal participated
November:		
Teacher Leader took charge. Worked as a group sharing ideas.	Teacher Leader took no charge.	Teacher Leader was a passive participant.
	Principal took charge.	Principal took charge.
High commitment among members	Low commitment among members	Low commitment among members
December:		
Have read all material, are ready to produce.	Did not come to class They have not met.	Went on a field trip. They are not as mad.
January:		
A guest speaker listened to the product and praised them greatly.	Brought in something and listened to the product.	Were not ready.
Members are excited.	Members are working.	
February:		
Piloted the product It was exciting! Evaluated the experience Morale high	The group is now 4. No administrators Are putting together a product Commitment stronger	Have surveyed the staff. Commitment ?
Stage of Development:		
Refocusing	Collaboration	Management

Initially, middle school teachers involved in the PDS project examined literature on what PDSs were and how they were perceived. At the same time, teachers created an overview of

what they believed were important traits for first year teachers to have. Using this information, each school formed a survey that was distributed to everyone in their school. This information was used to guide teachers toward a project to assist preservice teachers.

Hall et al. (1975), in their research on Levels of Concern, suggest that the orientation is critical in the acceptance of an innovation. Based on the above results, it is possible that the initial stage of management, including role development of the members involved was critical in each of these schools. Perhaps in Bouquet Middle School, the teacher's initial commitment to the project allowed them to pass successfully through each of the stages smoothly and display enthusiasm. Perhaps a lack of commitment and enthusiasm prevented Rocky Middle School from getting started until February and has left Tornado Elementary School still unmoved.

Furthermore, as Rushcamp and Roehler (1992) point out, schools must move at their own pace. It appears that the initial commitment of Bouquet Middle School had an impact on how successful they were. The description also suggests that teachers may work better when they have the autonomy among themselves with no administrators actively involved. Finally, the data suggest that outside support (from administrators or other leaders) provides teachers with much encouragement.

At the end of the 5 months, teachers from all three schools were asked to respond to a survey that presented 14 characteristics of Professional Development Schools as suggested by Collins (1994). In Table 2, teachers were asked to rank the

statements between Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Percentages were calculated for each set of teachers. Schools are coded by letter: B for Bouquet, T for Tornado, and R for Rocky Middle School.

Table 2.

Teacher's perceptions of how they perceived the relationship between CSU and their school, based on J. Collin's PDS characteristics. (N=16)

	SA Percentages			A Percentages			D Percentages			SD Percentages		
Schools:	B	R	T	B	R	T	B	R	T	B	R	T
1. Commitment of time and resources	50	50	-	50	25	67	-	25	11	-	-	22
2. Administrative support	25	-	-	75	50	78	-	25	11	-	25	11
3. Core group of leaders	75	25	11	25	50	44	-	-	34	-	25	11
4. Shared and common mission	75	50	-	25	50	44	-	-	44	-	-	-
5. Collaborative efforts	75	25	-	25	50	89	-	25	11	-	-	-
6. Opportunities for program development	50	25	-	50	50	89	-	25	11	-	-	-
7. Focuses on things central to what we teach	50	50	-	50	25	89	-	-	11	-	25	-
8. Is responsive to common needs	50	25	-	50	50	44	-	-	44	-	25	-
9. High levels of mutuality of exchange and achievement	75	25	-	25	50	33	-	-	56	-	25	11
10. Created equal partnerships	50	50	-	50	-	67	-	25	33	-	25	-
11. Displayed reciprocity of authority	75	-	-	25	75	89	-	-	11	-	25	-
12. Congenial, positive, productive interactions	75	-	11	25	100	89	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Built a genuine and abiding trust	50	25	-	50	50	78	-	25	22	-	-	-
14. Used consensual decision making	75	50	-	25	50	78	-	-	22	-	-	-

The data, in Table 2, suggest that those teachers who embrased the experience, created the product and implemented it, showed higher signs of believing the partnership existed. Those

schools who lacked a commitment at the beginning perceived a weaker link between the school and the university. It is thought that as the teachers go through the process, a higher level of development will be achieved.

Part II

An Evaluation of the Student Teaching Orientation

The second phase of this study is an examination of the orientation program one group of teachers completed. Student teachers who were assigned to that school experienced a 2-week orientation to the school including observations, methods, and management. This section also provides the reader with excerpts from the student teachers' notes.

A description of the orientation program. A core group of teachers in Bouquet Middle School designed a program that identified several strategies to work with preservice teachers in training them for becoming student teachers. The middle school teachers came up with a plan that introduced preservice teachers to teaming, the advisement program, teaching strategies, management techniques, and media. Preservice teachers were interviewed by administrative personnel and counselors in the school. The teachers also created a plan to allow students to observe and create short and long term plans as well as teach lessons. This group of teachers identified and created experiences for students that were both relevant and structured for preservice teachers to learn.

Five student teachers participated in the orientation program that was designed by 6 teachers as part of a Professional Development Site project between a middle school and Charleston

Southern University. One student teacher was teaching music, one was teaching social studies and three were teaching English. There was one male and four females. Four of the student teachers went through the entire program, one of the student teachers was sick for three days during the second week of the orientation.

The orientation program consisted of observations, interviews, actual teaching experiences, and mini-sessions that were designed by the PDS teachers. While the teachers conducted mini-sessions, the researcher and college liaison, taught the teacher's class. This proved to be very beneficial to the students.

Student Teachers Responses to the Orientation. The overall response from the student teachers involved was very positive. Comments from the student teachers were very positive about the experience. On the first day, they expressed, "This is great," in unison! In the daily sessions, the researcher as well as the cadre of teachers from Bouquet were able to answer lots of questions regarding what the protocol of the student teacher was with regard to the school and the supervising teacher. The cadre of teachers who developed the orientation worked with the student teachers as they reflected on the experiences of the orientation program. By the end of the first week, the students had no questions. Their concerns turned to teaching.

As part of the orientation experience, student teachers received training in how to conduct an advisory program. Each of the student teachers chose an activity and taught the lesson to 5

different classes in the second week. By the end of the second week, student teachers expressed that they were very comfortable teaching a lesson to a group of students. They identified ways that they had adjusted their lesson and reflected on how different groups of students responded differently to the same activity.

As the field notes indicate, the teachers passed from uncertainty and appreciation of the program to readiness to teach within two weeks. If we look at the CBAM levels of: awareness, information, personal concerns and through management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing, it was evident that the student teachers passed through the 1st two levels within the first week and passed level three by their second teaching day.

A Comparison of experiences. Student teachers who were at the PDS and those student teachers who were at other schools were asked to complete a survey to identify their readiness to teach and the helpfulness of various members of the staff. Student teachers from both settings were asked to evaluate how helpful various aspects of the program were to their development. Of the 45 student teachers who were in a student teaching meeting, 42 of them completed the survey.

Table 3 displays results of this survey. These data suggest that most students appear ready to teach within the second week of student teaching. While students who participated in the orientation appear to have been given more support by the entire school than those who had not participated in a school-wide orientation program, the level of readiness to teach does not appear to have been influenced by those experiences.

Table 3.

Survey of student teachers who were not involved (T) in the orientation program compared to those student teachers who were involved (B) in the orientation program.

Factor of support	1 least T	1 least B	2 little T	2 little B	3 some T	3 some B	4 more T	4 more B	5 most T	5 most B
Ready to teach	-	-	12	-	18	20	47	80	23	-
Team Members	12	20	2	-	10	-	14	20	62	60
Other Teachers	26	-	16	-	21	-	26	-	11	100
Exploratory	48	-	17	-	17	-	7	20	11	80
Administrators	12	-	12	-	21	20	29	20	26	60
Guidance	50	-	5	-	14	-	21	40	10	60
Librarian	14	20	2	-	17	-	17	20	50	60
Special Ed.	45	-	10	-	26	20	7	-	12	80

Benefits of the Program. After the orientation, the PDS Committee teachers met with the student teachers and the cooperating teachers to discuss the benefits of the experience. Student teachers identified three benefits that all of the teachers involved agreed with.

The first benefit was the support the teachers felt. Not only did the student teachers feel as though they were supported; but supervising teachers also felt that the orientation program made their job a lot easier. Because of the orientation, supervising teachers were the "nest" for the student teachers to return to every day. The PDS teachers also experienced a feeling of support for and from one another. Student teachers would ask the PDS Committee questions and commented on how they felt like

everyone treated them with respect. The experience truly became a group effort. All of the teachers involved identified a professional view of themselves in that they were helping other people become teachers. I also felt the support and camaraderie with "real teachers."

Student teachers and supervising teachers identified a second benefit of the program to be "familiarity with the school and procedures." PDS committee members designed the orientation program to give students plenty of opportunities to observe and participate with other members of the school. These experiences provided student teachers with a framework of how the school operated. This benefit made the supervising teachers' jobs easier as well. They did not have to spend time helping the student teacher find the xerox machine or where the nurse's office is.

A third benefit student teachers described was the opportunity for them to observe various teaching styles and techniques. We, as a PDS group, wondered if there were too many observations (student teachers had to observe at least 10 different teachers). Evidently, the observations exposed them to valuable information. All in all, the student teachers, the supervising teachers, and the PDS Committee were very pleased with the experience of creating a Professional Development Site.

Closing

Goodlad (1990) expressed a need for having more than one teacher supervise preservice teachers during the student teaching experience. Middle school teachers, such as this group, who decide to participate in developing a PDS are in a unique

position to work closely with preservice teachers to ensure that they receive sound experiences and thorough training. By using teams of teachers in middle schools to train teachers, there may be more opportunities for preservice teachers to develop as stronger teachers. The experience may also strengthen the middle school teachers' views of themselves as professionals.

Middle schools already collaborate with one another through the team process (Alexander, Williams, Compton, Hines, Prescott, & Kealy, 1969). To place a preservice teacher on a team gives them the benefit of learning how to work as a team member, the insight into how teams work and a support group in learning how to be an effective teacher. Setting up Professional Development Sites in middle schools gives public school teachers the opportunity to create experiences for preservice teachers based on the strengths of the staff and school. The beauty of working with PDSs is that each school can design and implement the experience according to their strengths and needs.

There appears to be five phases for implementing Professional Development Sites: 1) the selection of schools and members; 2) developing an understanding of what PDSs are; 3) identifying and writing up the programs; 4) the implementation of the PDS program; and 5) an evaluation of the preservice teachers, the regular teachers and administrators to improve the experience. Careful consideration needs to be taken in who is selected to participate in PDSs. There needs to be an initial goal and teachers need to see value in what is being created. Teachers and administrators must spend time reading about,

talking about, and visiting people who are experiencing a PDS relationship. Teachers may address a university problem such as preservice training or a school problem such as developing stronger teams. The cadre of teachers needs to meet regularly to diagnose and create alternatives. When teachers create a plan there must be a way to implement it. Testing the program can be the most exciting part of the experience. Finally, a thorough evaluation of the experience and vision for what to do next should be in place. The model is very clear-cut. The commitment of those involved will determine how well it succeeds.

The development of PDSs appears to work best when a group of teachers is committed to the program. It is also crucial to have a university liaison who can communicate and support the schools regardless of the setbacks. Persistence and support by the university personnel will ensure that the PDS can become a reality. Two key elements in the success of this study were that the teachers had the power to create what they and their colleagues believed were important experiences, and that we received support from other administrators and educational leaders at the school, university and the state level. Both of the elements centered around the worth of the program and our efforts to make a difference.

Teachers from Bouquet Middle School who participated in the development of the PDS appear to have passed through several of Hall et al. (1975) and Kagan's (1991) stages of development. Those teachers who were not a part of the cadre did not appear to benefit professionally from the experience. Teachers at the other schools that lacked leadership or commitment did not pass

through the stages as readily. It is possible that a commitment from administration and faculty and university will provide the most successful Professional Development Sites.

This study supports the value of university and school partnerships as described by Colin (1992). Benefits were expressed by all parties involved where the program was able to get to the implementation stage (Dixon & Ishler, 1992; & Kagan, 1991). As in the Dixon and Ishler study (1992), those groups of teachers who were unable to reach the stage of implementation, did not express the benefits of working as part of a PDS that those teachers at Bouquet Middle School experienced. Benefits of camaraderie with one another, sharing their expertise with the students through mini-sessions, and pride of having made a difference in the lives of those student teachers were expressed.

As PDSs continue to rise as the experience of choice for colleges of education, perhaps we will be able to provide better experiences earlier for preservice teachers with the help of middle school teachers. Through PDSs, teachers and university personnel will be able to ignite the energy in preservice teachers who are committed to teaching and help preservice teachers who perhaps have chosen the wrong field to identify that mistake early. The experience will also support the professionalism of teachers sharing their expertise with preservice teachers. PDSs are here; they are working; they are worth the effort and need to be incorporated in more school systems.

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